

Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck, Chair, UDP Committee
Councilmember Richard Conlin
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

FROM: Diane M. Sugimura

DATE: May 18, 2006

SUBJECT: Committee Briefing: DPD Monthly Update for May 24, 2006 Meeting

Permit Activity Through April

Development continues as hot as ever. It is very difficult for staff to maintain this pace. We are using contingent budget authority to the maximum. We continue to use contractors, but they too are pushed and have asked us to slow down on sending them work. In some units, we are going to mandatory overtime for a specified time period.

For Master Use Permits, applications per month continue to hover around the mid-90s for the first four months of the year, compared with mid-50s to mid-60s the previous year, or more than a 50% increase in the number of applications for the first four months of 2006. We are pleased with our review times in Land Use in spite of the huge workload. For the year, 69% of the decisions were published within 120 days (chess clock); however, in April we improved to 75% of decisions being published within 120 days. Our goal is 80%; our 2005 baseline was 50%.

In terms of construction permits for 2006, we have taken in 3,120 applications, an increase of 25% over 2005. In comparison, intake values are up 53% over 2005 indicating that not only has the volume significantly increased, but value has increased at a much greater rate, an indication of the complexity or scale of the projects. In four months, intake values totaled \$894 million, which when projected would mean potentially as high as \$2.7 billion, a billion dollars more than our record year in 2005.

In terms of turnaround times, we exceeded our goal of 80% of applications for simple projects receiving their initial review within 48 hours. We fell short, however, in terms of our target for completing 70% of initial review for complex projects within 6 weeks. We were slightly over 50% at the end of April. We have issued 2,758 permits, an increase of



19% over 2005, but in spite of this significant increase in production, we are still not able to keep up due to the heavy workload.

Planning Projects Summary:

Waterfront Concept Plan: Concept proposal will be sent to Council shortly, for presentation to the Committee of the Whole in early June.

South Downtown: Another Advisory Group meeting for South Downtown has been scheduled for May 24; the EIS Scoping meeting will be held on June 1.

Multifamily Code Update: An Open House was held on May 3, attended by about 50 citizens including a mix from community representatives to designers/developers and affordable housing advocates. Notes from the small group discussions will soon be posted on our website. Staff is also meeting with individual organizations such as the North Beacon Hill group, and Master Builders. Meetings are being arranged with the Greater Seattle Chamber, Queen Anne, and Fremont, as requested.

North Beacon Hill Design Guidelines: A public hearing has been scheduled for June 28.

Pet Daycare Ordinance: Recommendations will soon be transmitted to Council.

Detached Accessory Dwelling Units: We continue to hear from members of the public who eagerly await DADU legislation.

Public Outreach and Communications ... Recent Past and Future

- May 2: High Point Exhibit Reception, lower lobby of Seattle Municipal Tower
- May 3: Multi-family Zoning Changes Public Open House and Working Session
- May 8: Urban Sustainability Forum “Celebrating Water in Urban Design” – Dieter Grau, landscape architect for Atelier Dreiseitl (Oberlingen, Germany)
- May 13: Home Improvement Workshop/Jackson Street Center
- May 18: USGS Landslide Maps Presentation/Carkeek Park
- May 23: Northgate Channel Construction kick-off Meeting
- May 24: Livable South Downtown Advisory Group Meeting
- June 1: Livable South Downtown EIS Scoping Meeting
- June 5: Urban Sustainability Forum – Walter Hood, Chair of Landscape Architecture at UC Berkeley and principal of Hood Design.
- June 8: Northgate CTIP EIS Comment Meeting
- June 10: Home Improvement Workshop/University Heights Center
- June 12: South Lake Union Urban Center/Final Plan Meeting